Final Resource Assessment

Blackfoot River
Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Study
and
Tentative Classification

United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

Upper Snake River District

December 2002

Determination of Eligibility and Classification for the Blackfoot River Wild and Scenic River Study

A Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Study of the Blackfoot River, in Bingham and Caribou County, Idaho has been completed. Segment 9 (Miner Creek to Cedar Creek) was found eligible and given a tentative classification of "Scenic" under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act by a Bureau of Land Management interdisciplinary (ID) Team.

Public comments on the eligibility of the Blackfoot River segments were solicited through mailings and public meetings. A draft of the assessment was made available for public comment and review. All comments received were summarized within the Eligibility report.

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Approved: BLM Pocatello Field Office Manager Date

Executive Summary

During the spring and summer of 2002 a Bureau of Land Management Inter disciplinary (ID) Team conducted a Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Study on public lands along the Blackfoot River between Government Dam, and just below where Wolverine Creek empties into the Blackfoot River. This study was performed to determine if the study area associated with the Blackfoot River meets eligibility criteria for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The Blackfoot River Study Area was divided into eleven segments with the breaks between segments being determined primarily by land ownership. The ID Team only analyzed those segments containing public land. It was determined that non-public land would only be included in the study if the landowner or managing entity willingly volunteered to include their lands in the study.

The ID team concluded that only one segment located within the study area on the Blackfoot River is eligible to be included into the National Wild and Scenic River System. This is Segment 9, which comprises 5.6 river miles of both tribal and public lands. Only the side of the river containing public land was analyzed for eligibility. This Segment was found to be eligible for its outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, and botanical values. The southeast side of the river is within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation and was not analyzed for eligibility.

Final Resource Assessment for the Blackfoot River Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Study and Tentative Classification

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Congress enacted the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (NWSRA) on October 2, 1968. This act recognizes that certain rivers needed additional protection. The Act states:

> "certain selected rivers of the Nation, which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefits and enjoyment of present and future generations" (16 U.S.C. 1271-1287).

This law created the National Wild and Scenic River System (NWSRS), which upon inclusion provides protective management and control of development to those designated rivers, respective of the classification level.

1.1 Location

The Blackfoot River Study Area is located in southeast Idaho, within Bingham and Caribou Counties (Figure 1). The Bear River and Blackfoot River are two rivers within the Pocatello Field Office that have significant flows and contain a significant amount of public land along their shorelines. The Blackfoot River Study Area has the most significant stretch of free-flowing river within the lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Pocatello Field Office.

The Blackfoot River Study Area is approximately 44 miles long, starting at the Government Dam, and ending below where Wolverine Creek empties into the Blackfoot River. This Eligibility Study only focuses on those BLM-administered lands along the Blackfoot River below the Blackfoot Reservoir. There are approximately 6,080 acres of public lands located within the study area (see Figure 1). Approximately 11 miles of the study area are located adjacent to the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, which is the homeland of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. The non-public lands located within the study area were not assessed in this study, unless landowners or managing entities volunteered to include their lands. No private land owners, agencies, or the tribes volunteered to include their lands.

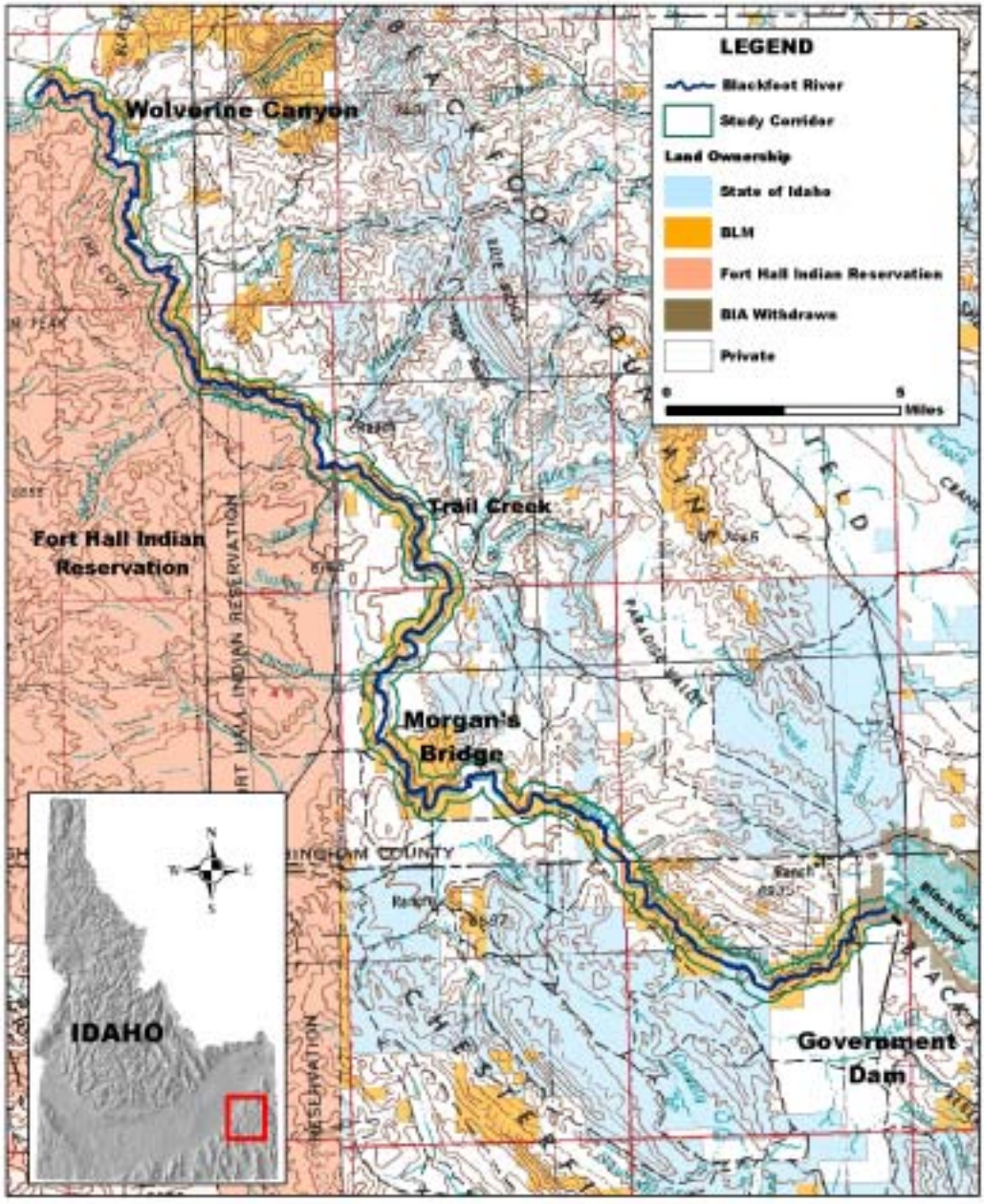

Figure 1. Vicinity Map of the Blackfoot River Study Area

The inventory of river-related resources was limited to the half-mile corridor along the mainstem of the river, and did not include any of the tributaries to the Blackfoot River. Due to the minimal amount of public lands and insignificance of flows, the tributaries of the Blackfoot River within the study area were not analyzed in this eligibility study. The study area was divided into 11 segments for the purposes of evaluation; segments were identified by land ownership, (i.e., only public lands along the river were evaluated). These segments are identified in Table 1.

Table 1. Blackfoot River Segments – Miles

Segment Number and Name	Miles	Landowner
1 – Government Dam	3.8	BLM
2 – State (Not Studied)	1.4	State
3 – Sagehen	7.8	BLM
4 – Private land (Not Studied)	2.0	Private
5 – Morgan's Bridge	3.1	BLM
6 – Mixed Ownership	2.2	Private/BLM
7 – Trail Creek	7.3	BLM
8 – Private (Not Studied)	1.9	Private
9 – Wood Creek	5.6	BLM/Tribal
10 – Mixed Ownership	6.6	BLM/Private
11- Wolverine Creek or Canyon	2.6	BLM
Total Miles	**44.3 miles**	

1.2 Purpose and Need

Section 5(d)(1) of the NWSRA authorizes and directs federal land management agencies to assess the rivers and water resources and determine if those waters are eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS. Assessments are done as a part of the planning and development process for federal land management agencies' land use plans.

BLM Manual 8351 also requires District and Field Office Managers to "evaluate river segments within the context of the resource management planning process to determine eligibility, tentative classifications, protective requirements, and suitability under the NWSRA." Rivers are to be identified by the BLM for investigation as to their potential for possible inclusion under the

NWSRA. The BLM is required to make recommendations, as appropriate, for further legislative actions to ensure protection of river segments determined to be eligible.

Recommendation for studying the Blackfoot River for possible inclusion under the NWSRA was made by American Rivers, and the river was subsequently listed on the 1982 Nationwide Rivers Inventory under the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Programs. A Notice of Intent to Prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Pocatello/Malad Planning Area of the Upper Snake River District in Southeastern Idaho was issued and published in the Federal Register on November 14, 2001 (Federal Register, 2001a). This notice included issues that will be addressed within the planning area. The Blackfoot River Wild and Scenic Rivers study was included in the notice of intent, and needs to be completed for inclusion in the Resource Management Plan and EIS.

1.3 Overview of the Wild and Scenic River Evaluation Process

A river under consideration for inclusion in the NWSRS is evaluated by agencies under a two-step study process: eligibility and tentative classification, and suitability. Eligibility and tentative classification are generally combined, producing a river resource assessment. The river assessment only evaluates the river's potential eligibility, and classifies the eligible river segments.

1.3.1 Eligibility and Tentative Classification

In order for a river to be eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS, the river must be "free-flowing" and possess one or more "outstandingly remarkable" resource values.

The NWSRA defines *rivers* as "a flowing body of water or estuary, or section, portion, or tributary thereof, including rivers, streams, creeks, runs, rills, and small lakes."

A river is considered to be *free-flowing* if the flow is maintained in a natural condition free of impoundments, diversions, straightening, rip-rapping or other waterway modifications. The existence of low dams, diversions, or other minor structures above or below the study segments of the river does not rule out the river for consideration (including those that may regulate the flow regime through the segment). Also, the river segment does not have to be "floatable or boatable," to be eligible, nor are there any minimum flow requirements. For purposes of eligibility determination, the volume of flow is sufficient if it is enough to maintain the outstandingly remarkable values identified within the segment. Additionally, there are no regulatory requirements specifying a minimum length for river segments being considered for potential eligibility.

Outstandingly remarkable resource values to be considered during the inventory include scenic, recreational, historic/cultural, geologic, fishery, wildlife, botanical/ecological, and hydrological/water quality. Additional similar resource values can also be included at the discretion of the agency. The determination of "outstandingly remarkable" is based on the professional judgment of the interdisciplinary team. Resource values demonstrating unique, rare, or exemplary features are deemed to be "outstandingly remarkable."

1.3.2 Tentative Classifications

Once a river segment is deemed to meet the eligibility criteria, it is then given a tentative classification of wild, scenic, or recreational. These categories are defined below.

> **Wild rivers:** Those rivers, or sections of rivers, that are free of impoundments and are generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds, or shorelines that are essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent the vestiges of primitive America.
>
> **Scenic rivers:** Those rivers, or sections of rivers, that are free of impoundments with shorelines, or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.
>
> **Recreational rivers:** Those rivers, or sections of rivers, that are readily accessible by road, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment, or diversion in the past. This classification does not imply that the river will be prioritized or managed strictly for recreational use or recreational development.

Classification of the river considers the condition and qualities of the river and its adjacent lands as they exist at the time of the study.

1.3.3 Suitability

Determination of a river's suitability is the next step in determining a river segment's status. The suitability phase of the wild and scenic river process involves analyzing the information gathered and presented in the eligibility phase to determine whether or not the eligible river segment should be recommended to be a part of the NWSRS. Suitability is based on an analysis of the river areas' values, current ownership and use, and anticipated future land and water uses. Environmental, economic, and social impacts that will be associated with designation of a river segment as wild and scenic are also considered in the determination of suitability. If a river is determined to be suitable, the recommendation is carried through to the Resource Management Plan development and if found warranted the nomination is forwarded to Congress. The river may then become part of the NWSRS if Congress designates the river as such.

1.4 Resource Assessment Process for Eligibility

The BLM has identified the Blackfoot River as a potential Wild and Scenic River, and therefore has initiated this assessment to determine eligibility. Eleven segments of the Blackfoot River were analyzed to determine if they are eligible for classification as a Wild and Scenic River, after which a determination of tentative classification (wild, scenic, or recreational) for the eligible segments was made.

This report focuses on the Eligibility and Tentative Classification Phase of the process. In the eligibility phase, the river must meet two criteria. First, the river or the segment of the river, must be free-flowing; and second, it must have at least one outstandingly remarkable value. The NWSRA regulations identify the values to consider when determining potential outstandingly

remarkable values, including, but not limited to, scenic, recreational, historic/cultural, geologic, fishery, wildlife, botanical/ecological, and hydrological/water quality.

The values present within the study corridor have been evaluated by an Interdisciplinary (ID) Team, which is made up of BLM resource specialists. Shoshone-Bannock Tribal representatives and members of the Blackfoot River Watershed Council (BRWC) were invited to participate in the ID Team meetings and field surveys. Members of the ID Team consisted of an outdoor recreation planner, a botanist, a mining engineer, a hydrologist, a fisheries biologist, a wildlife biologist, and an archaeologist. Representatives of the Shoshone Bannock Tribes included a fish biologist, a biologist, a land use policy commissioner, and a member of the heritage tribal office. Members of the BRWC that participated on the ID Team included the BRWC chairperson and a Blackfoot citizen committee representative. The ID Team visited and analyzed the river segments within the study corridor in May and June 2002 and have met multiple times to evaluate and analyze the findings of the field surveys as well as the public comments.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE BLACKFOOT RIVER STUDY AREA

2.1 Climate

The climate of the region is generally semi-arid, with a mean annual temperature of 46.1º F. Mean annual precipitation ranges between 10 – 20 inches. The elevation of the shoreline of the Blackfoot River ranges from 4,700 - 6,100 feet above sea level. Air quality for the study corridor is rated as Class II, which is common for public lands. There are three classes of air quality: Class I is for pristine airsheds located near National Parks; Class II is for airsheds not within a non-attainment area or in a Class I area; and Non-attainment areas.

2.2 Physical

The Blackfoot River begins in the Webster Mountain Range of southeastern Idaho and flows 139 miles before entering the Snake River near the City of Blackfoot, just above the American Falls Reservoir. In 1909, the Blackfoot Reservoir was constructed to store water for the Fort Hall Irrigation Project. The segment of the river below the dam flows and meanders through basalt cliffs and canyons and through State, Federal, private, and tribal lands.

The Study Area includes approximately 19 miles of the Blackfoot River, starting at the Government Dam, and ending below where Wolverine Creek drains into the Blackfoot River. The corridor is one-half mile wide, with one-quarter mile on each side of the river for approximately 44 miles. There are 6,080 acres of public land located within the study area (see Figure 1).

The upper half of the study area is a meandering river, with seasonal fluctuations largely controlled by releases from the dam. There are five tributaries that flow into this segment of the river. Below Sagehen and Cutthroat Trout Campgrounds, there are approximately 40 tributaries, made up of springs and ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial streams that drain into the mainstem of the Blackfoot River. Steep canyon walls, with distinct basalt cliffs, characterize the

lower half of the river area. Vegetation throughout the study area consists primarily of sagebrush-grass communities with scattered meadow communities in the valleys, and riparian communities located along the banks of the river.

2.3 Land Ownership

The lands present within this study area included Federal, State, private, and tribal lands. Private and State lands comprise a small portion of the study area and were not analyzed during the field assessments. Approximately three quarters of the river study area is located on Federal lands administered by the BLM. A segment of the river bounds the northeast corner of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. Lands on the reservation were not analyzed on the reservation during the field assessments.

2.4 Farming

Agriculture has been the predominant industry since the area was first settled. In this high altitude, semi-arid country, settlers turned to controlling the surface waters through diversion dams, ditches, and canal systems. Dry land farming is common practice in the areas that have no artificial water delivery system.

2.5 Grazing

Missionaries originally brought the livestock grazing industry into this area, with the earliest use based in Fort Hall due to the presence of lush vegetation. Cattle were traded both to local Indians and emigrants passing through on the Oregon Trail. The gold rush encouraged the growth of this industry, and more herds were driven into the area. The sheep industry also grew, providing necessary food and clothing to the area's gold miners, emigrants, and missionaries. The local Indians were also encouraged to take up the cattle business; under the Dawes Act tribal members were assigned individual grazing allotments, within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation.

There are 9 small to intermediate sized grazing allotments within the study area administered by the BLM (see Figure 2, and Table 2). The majority of the grazed lands are on unimproved range land. A designated stock driveway runs along the river in the study area, and grazing leases are authorized within the stock driveway. Conflicts have arisen because livestock can freely trespass between the stock driveway and the adjacent private lands due to a lack of fencing. The intent of the designated stock driveway was to reserve forage for stock in transit. This would restrict grazing to short periods in the spring and fall. Conflicts arose after existing leases were issued to resolve a trespass problem because adjacent private lands aren't fenced separately from the public land and the livestock were using the public land without authorization.

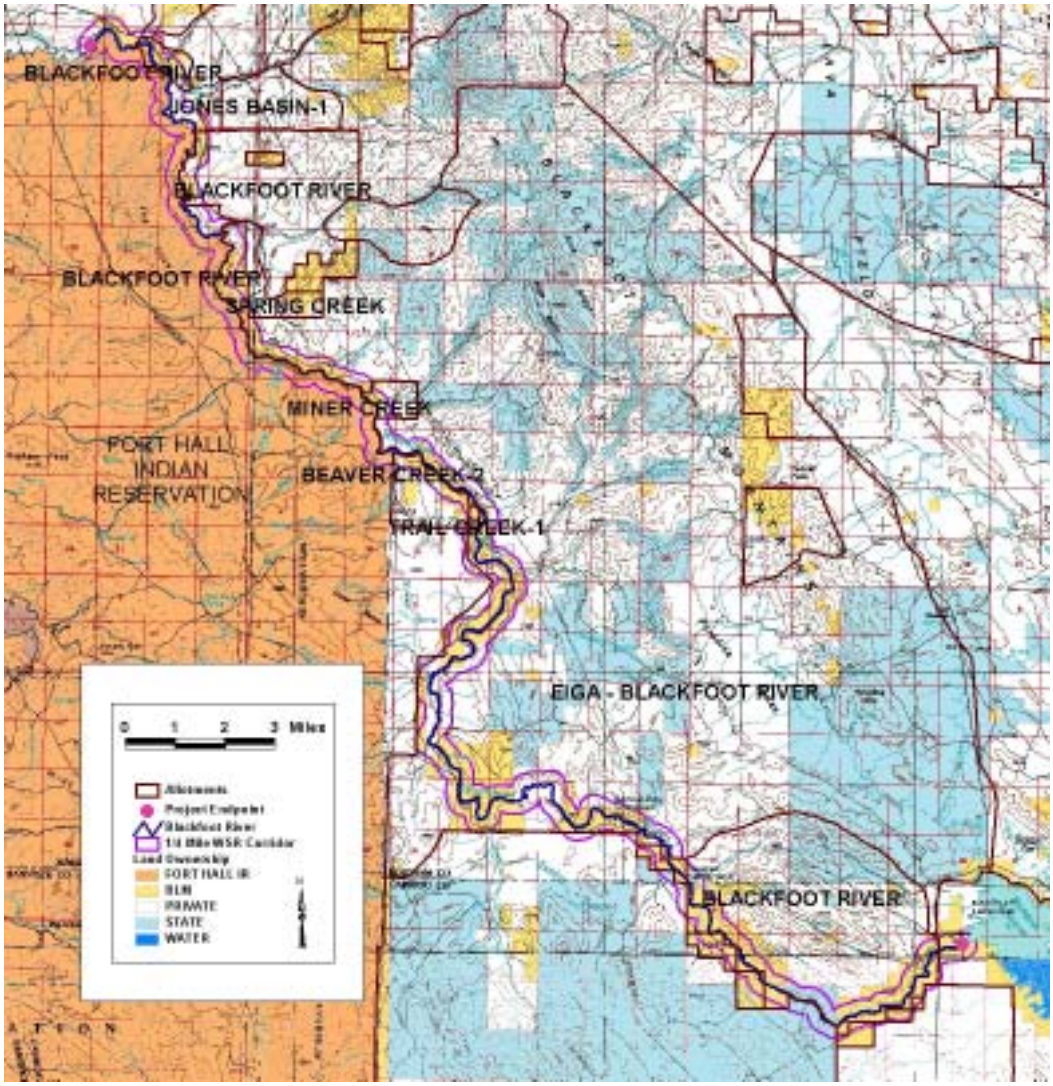

Figure 2. Grazing allotments associated with the Wild and Scenic River Study Area.

Table 2. BLM Grazing Allotments Information.

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Season of Use	AUMs	Animal
14092	Blackfoot River 1	5/1-10/31 5/1-10/31	15 15	Cattle Horse
04430*	Blackfoot River	4/1 – 4/15	20	Cattle
04201	Blackfoot River	4/15 5/15 9/15–11/30	122 304	Cattle Cattle
14033	Spring Creek	5/1-10/30	4	Cattle
04413	Miner Creek	10/1-2/28	8	Cattle
04316	Beaver Creek	9/10-11/1	54	Cattle
04419	Trail Creek	10/1-2/28	8	Cattle
14320	Blackfoot River	5/10-10/30 5/1-7/1	124 317	Cattle Sheep
14112	EIGA – Blackfoot River	5/10-11/10 5/10-11-10	650 705	Cattle Sheep

*Note: There will be no legal use of Blackfoot River #04430 in 2002.

2.6 Irrigation

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) originally built the Blackfoot Reservoir in 1909, for water storage to provide irrigation water for lands on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. The dam (also known as the Government Dam) is operated, managed and maintained by the BIA. Normal operation of the dam to control stream flow for irrigation use results in seasonal fluctuations of the stream flow immediately below the dam.

2.7 Tribal Lands and Treaty Rights

The bands of the Shoshone and Bannock peoples original range was extensive, from central Montana, east into central Wyoming, north into the Salmon River territory, west into Oregon and Nevada, and south into Utah. As more settlers arrived in the area, conflicts arose between the Indians and non-Indians. The U.S. government negotiated several treaties with the local Indians, but none were ratified by Congress until 1868.

The Fort Hall Indian Reservation was created pursuant to an Executive Order dated June 14, 1867 and The 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty signed by the U.S. Government and the Shoshone and Bannock Tribes. The Shoshone and Bannock peoples agreed to make the Fort Hall Reservation their permanent homeland, and to reserve the right to hunt, fish, and gather off reservation. A series of land cessations occurred over the next few years, which ultimately resulted in the present day reservation boundaries established in 1900 (see Figure 3). The Treaty retained rights including, but are not limited to, wood-gathering, hunting, fishing, harvesting plant resources, livestock grazing, and practicing tribal cultural activities on unoccupied Federal lands which

include all BLM lands. As a Federal agency, the BLM has trust responsibility to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes for the management of Federal lands. Trust responsibility is related to traditional/cultural uses, as well as the health of the land and water resources or the socio-economic needs of the Tribes. These trust responsibilities supersede all actions associated with the Wild and Scenic River Study and will be addressed in the upcoming RMP. The Tribes fully expect the BLM to continue to uphold their trust responsibility to protect, conserve, and manage those trust resources.

The Blackfoot River is the northeast boundary of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation lands. The tribal lands bordering the river are zoned as both Open Space and Rangelands. There are no individual grazing allotments bordering the Blackfoot River on the west side of the river on Tribal lands; all allotments on this side of the river are tribal, with use designated by the Tribes. Portions of the study area are located within Range Units 1 and 3, under the 1970 Range Management Map. Within Unit 3 there is a section designated as "Farm & Other Lands not in Range Unit," which may be included within the quarter mile corridor adjacent to the river. Those lands include pasturelands, and may include some limited dry land farms. Turn out dates for livestock generally run from May 1 to October 15 (Table 2). Overall, the rangeland conditions are classified as poor, due to grazing activity, drought conditions, and lack of riparian management plans (Helsel, 2002).

3.0 ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

3.1 Introduction

In this section, the definition of free-flowing, and a discussion of the outstandingly remarkable values are presented. A description of the assessments for each resource is also provided. Those resources within the study area that were identified as potentially having outstandingly remarkable values are discussed. Additionally, those resources that were not determined to be outstandingly remarkable, but do contribute substantially to the river system functions and/or river settings, are described.

For the purposes of evaluation, the river study area was tentatively divided into 11 segments, mainly based on land ownership. However, features such as changes in the river character, including the presence of dams/reservoirs, the level of development along the shorelines, land use, significant changes in the physiographic character, tributaries, features, and/or significant changes in land status, were also considered in the identification of the river segments. There is no requirement on how long the segments must be, other than the length must be adequate to protect the outstandingly remarkable value present.

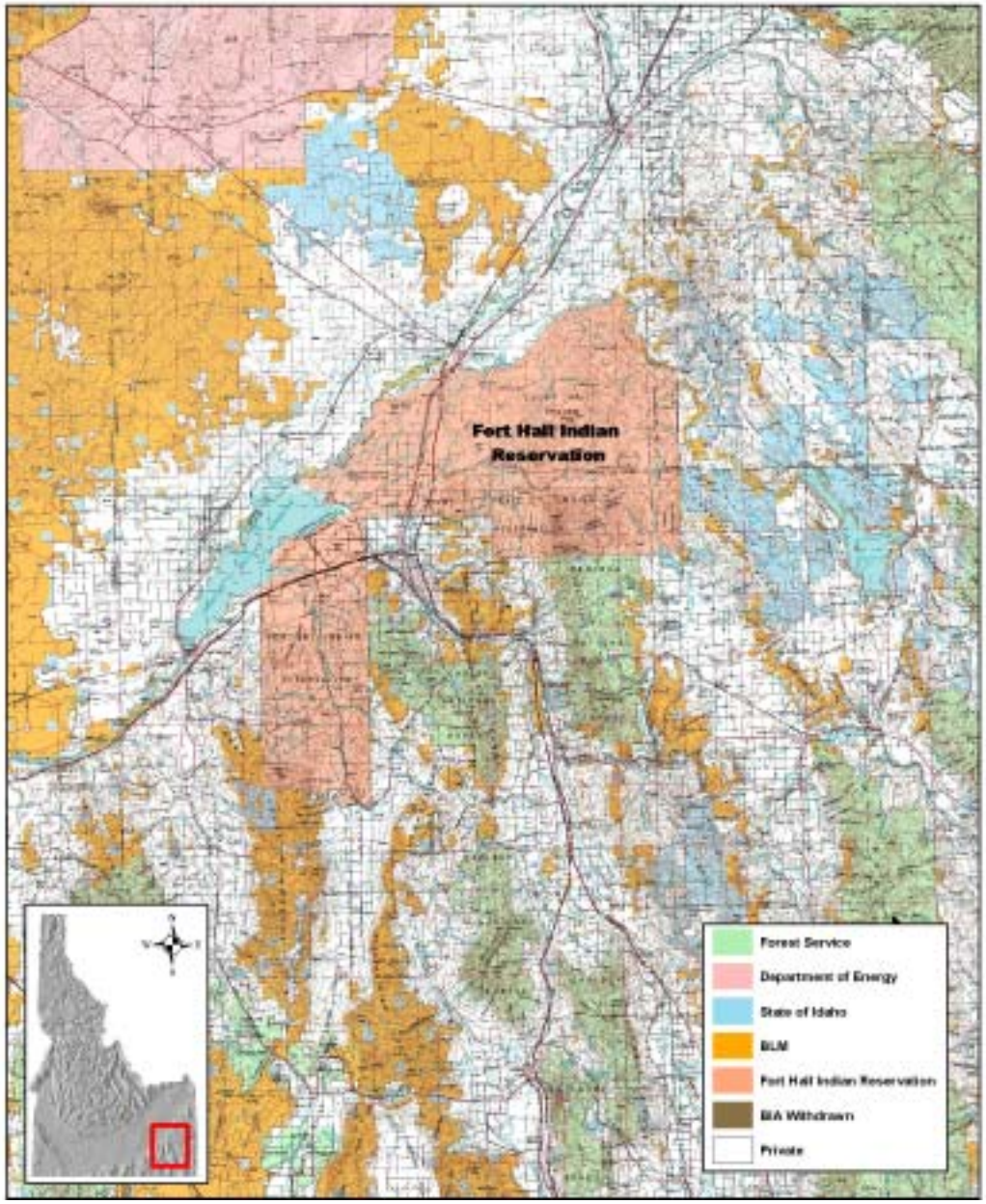

Figure 3. Fort Hall Indian Reservation Boundaries, and Surrounding Surface Management Status.

3.2 Free-Flowing

Section 16(b) of the NWSRA provides the definition of free-flowing:

> "As applied to any river or section of a river, means existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway. The existence of low dams, diversion works, and other minor structures at the time any river is proposed for inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system shall not automatically bar its consideration for such inclusion: *Provided*, that this shall not be construed to authorize, intend, or encourage future construction of such structures within components of the national wild and scenic rivers system."

3.2.1 Evaluation

The river segments established for this eligibility study do not have any impoundments or diversions that have been identified. There are dams and diversions above and below the segments, but these are outside of the study boundaries established by the ID Team. Therefore, all 11 segments of the river included in this study were found to be "free flowing."

3.3 Outstandingly Remarkable Values

The ID Team met several times to discuss criteria for determining outstandingly remarkable values. A decision was made to use the BLM 8351 Handbook criteria, and then incorporate additional BLM District-wide specific criteria or considerations that may be present. This allows the agency specialists to determine outstandingly remarkable values based on informed professional judgment and interpretation. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes participated in the Eligibility Study and Native American Traditional Uses were included as a criterion, under the other category. Furthermore, as a Federal agency, the BLM has trust responsibility to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes on the management of Federal lands. Trust responsibility is related to protection of traditional/cultural uses, as well as the health of the land and water resources, or the socio-economic needs of the Tribes.

Outstandingly remarkable values were judged based on defined national and regional significance criteria. To determine that a river has values that are outstandingly remarkable on a regional level, a region needs to be delineated, allowing the river under review to be compared against others in the region. The size of the comparative area should not be so large as to unreasonably limit outstandingly remarkable rivers to only those standing out as the best in the nation, nor so small as to make most rivers qualify as exemplary in some way.

For the Blackfoot River Eligibility Study, a previously defined regionally comparative area, developed by the U.S. Forest Service for the Caribou National Forest, was used to provide a context for assessment of the uniqueness or rareness of the outstandingly remarkable values at a regional comparative level. The Caribou National Forest Wild & Scenic Rivers Eligibility Determination Report (USFS, 1998) delineated a regionally comparative area that included all drainages flowing into the Bear River, the Salt River, or the Snake River (see Figure 4). The decision to use this regionally comparative area was made because it encompasses the Blackfoot River Study Area and the designated boundaries of the comparative area had already gone

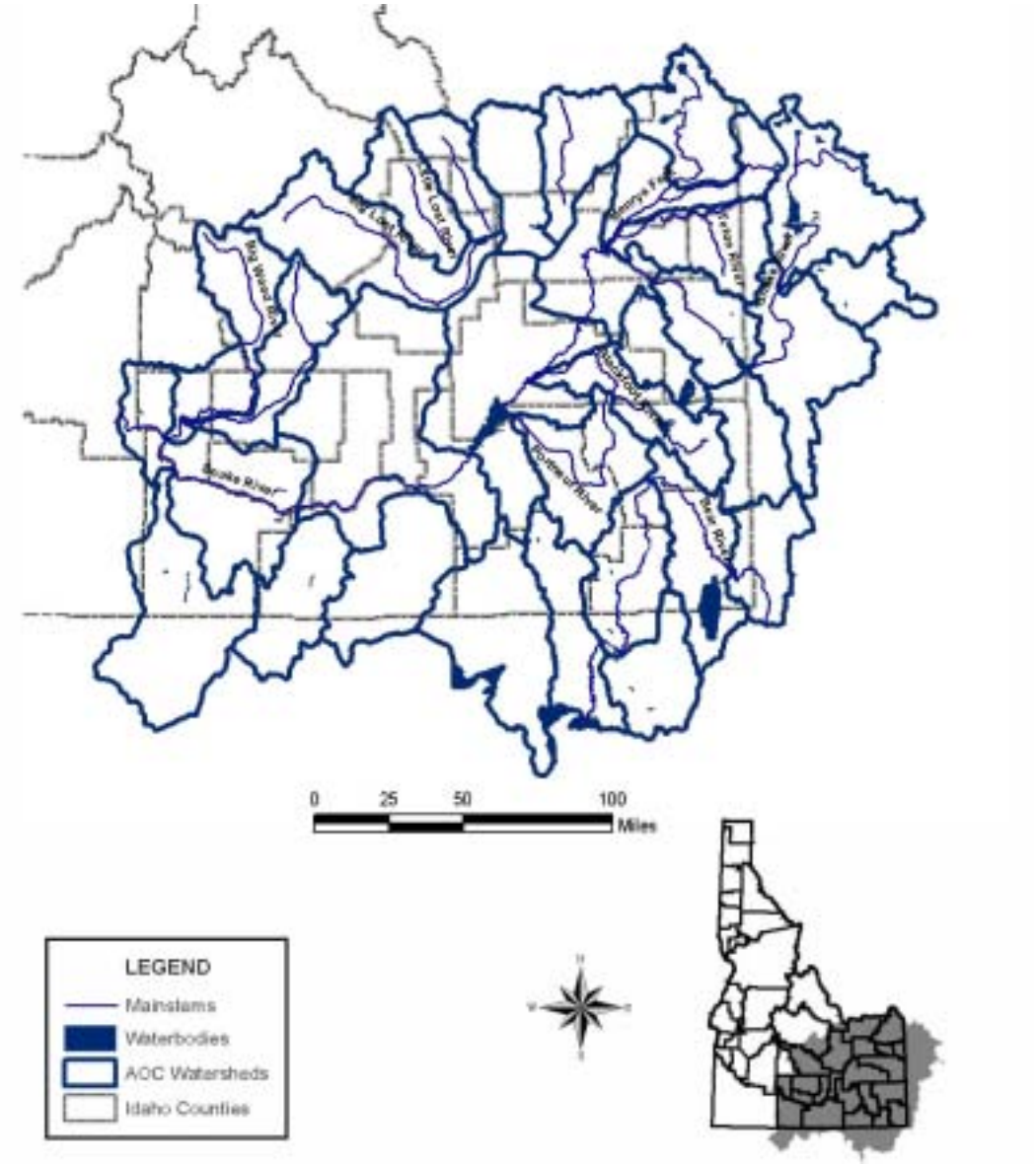

Figure 4. Wild and Scenic River Study Regional Comparative Area.

through the public review and approval process. The decision also maintains consistency in planning for the project area.

3.4 Scenic

3.4.1 Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

The BLM Visual Resource Inventory Handbook, H-8410-1, was used in assessing visual quality and in evaluating the extent of development upon scenic values. The BLM Visual Resource Inventory Handbook describes the scenic quality analysis process as follows:

> "Scenic quality is a measure of the visual appeal of a tract of land. In the visual resource inventory process, public lands are give an A, B, or C rating based on the apparent scenic quality which is determined using seven key factors: landform, vegetation, water, color, adjacent scenery, scarcity, and cultural modifications. During the rating process each of these factors is ranked on a comparative basis with similar features within the physiographic province. An important premise of the evaluation is that all public lands have scenic value, but areas with the most variety and most harmonious composition have the greatest scenic value. Another important concept is that the evaluation of scenic quality is done in relationship to the natural landscape."

The criteria used to assess scenic quality included the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, adjacent scenery, scarcity and cultural modifications that result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions within the geographic region.

3.4.2 Scenic Quality - Explanation of Rating Criteria

To receive a classification of outstandingly remarkable value the scenic area being rated must receive a scenic quality "A" as defined in the BLM Visual Resource Inventory Handbook, H-8410-1. The landscape elements are evaluated and given a numerical value of 0-5 (5 being the highest value). To determine the scenic classification of a river segment (A, B, or C) the sum of the landscape elements numerical value is analyzed and areas receiving a numerical value of 19 or higher are Class A segments, 12-18 are Class B segments, and less than 12 are Class C segments. When analyzing scenic values, additional factors such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural modifications, and the length of time negative intrusions are viewed may be considered. Scenery and other visual attractions may be highly diverse over the majority of the river segment length and not common to other rivers in the geographic region. Indicators that are used as aids in assessing and applying a numerical value to the landscape elements outlined in the BLM Visual Resource Inventory Handbook are briefly described below.

3.4.2.1 Landform

Topography becomes more interesting as it gets steeper or more massive, or more severely or universally sculptured. Outstanding landforms may be monumental, as the Grand Canyon, the Sawtooth Mountain Range in Idaho, the Wrangell Mountain Range in Alaska, or they may be exceedingly artistic and subtle as certain badlands, pinnacles, arches, and other extraordinary formations.

3.4.2.2 Vegetation

Primary consideration is given to the variety of patterns, forms, and textures created by plant life. Short-lived displays are considered when they are known to be recurring or spectacular. Smaller scale vegetation features, which add striking and intriguing detail elements to the landscape (e.g., gnarled or windbeaten trees and joshua trees), are also considered.

3.4.2.3 Water

Water is the ingredient that adds movement or serenity to a scene. The degree to which water dominates the scene is the primary consideration in selecting the rating score.

3.4.2.4 Color

The overall color(s) of the basic components of the landscape (e.g., soil, rock, vegetation, etc.) as they appear during seasons or periods of high use are considered. Key factors used when rating "color" are variety, contrast, and harmony.

3.4.2.5 Adjacent Scenery

The degree to which scenery outside the scenery unit being rated enhances the overall impression of the scenery within the rating unit is considered. The scenery adjacent to the rating area can influence scenery within the rating unit. The adjacent scenery's impact, up to 5 miles from the rating unit is dependent upon the characteristics of the topography, the vegetative cover, and other such factors. This factor is generally applied to units that would normally rate very low in score, but the influence of the adjacent unit would enhance the visual quality and raise the score.

3.4.2.6 Scarcity

This factor provides an opportunity to give added importance to one or all of the scenic features that appear to be relatively unique or rare within one physiographic region. There may also be cases where a separate evaluation of each of the key factors does not give a true picture of the overall scenic quality of an area. Often it is a number of not so spectacular elements in the proper combination that produces the most pleasing and memorable scenery. The scarcity factor can be used to recognize this type of area and give it the added emphasis it needs.

3.4.2.7 Cultural Modifications

Cultural modifications in the landform/water, vegetation, and addition of structures should be considered and may detract from the scenery in the form of a negative intrusion or complement or improve the scenic quality of a unit.

3.4.3 Evaluation of Present Situation

A visual resources assessment was conducted as part of the field investigations. It was found that the study corridor consisted of areas with shallow to deep canyons, rolling hills, open meadows, Salt Lake geologic formations, highly eroded formations, high basalt cliffs, and areas with numerous rapids and cascading whitewater. In some areas the adjacent scenery would enhance the overall visual quality of a segment. The water just below the dam appeared to be cloudy and became clearer farther down stream. The water flows were regulated by the releases from the dam. Cultural modifications that were witnessed along the study corridor include home-sites, ranches, roads (two-track, gravel, and dirt), recreation sites, fences, powerlines,

dams, signs, bridges, and evidence of off-highway vehicle use. In general, the vegetation within the corridor had very little variety.

3.4.4 Resource Assessment Findings

Segments 7 and 9 were found to have potential Outstandingly Remarkable Scenic Values. Segment 7 received a scenic quality rating of "A" because of the presence of deep canyons with high basalt cliffs. The vegetation consisted primarily of juniper/sage communities. Water in this stretch at the time of the field survey was clear and swift with numerous rapids (Class II-III) visible. The adjacent scenery enhanced the overall visual qualities of this segment of the river. Cultural modifications are minimal, but include a home-site, roads, fences, trails, and power lines. Even though this segment was found to have a scenic quality rating of "A" it was determined that it is not rare, unique, or exemplary on the regional comparative basis, and that the scenic values within this segment are not an ORV.

Segment 9 received a scenic quality rating of "A" because of the deep canyons, Salt Lake formations, highly eroded formations, and high basalt cliffs. There is a wide variety of vegetation found within this segment. Cascading whitewater is a dominant feature, including class IV-V rapids. Rich color combinations associated with soils, rocks, and vegetation were present. The adjacent scenery enhances the overall scenic quality of the segment. It was also determined that this stretch of canyon and its scenic value is rare within the region, and it is overall, a primitive canyon stretch, therefore, it has been determined that the scenic values for Segment 9 are an ORV.

3.5 Recreational

3.5.1 Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

The river may be considered eligible for recreation if it receives high use or potentially provides an important recreation experience, which may be rare or is lacking in the region. Recreational opportunities should be, or have the potential to be, unique enough to attract visitors from outside of the geographic region. River-related opportunities could include but are not limited to sightseeing, wildlife observation, camping, photography, hiking, rock climbing, fishing, hunting, and boating. Interpretive opportunities should be exceptional and have the potential to attract visitors from outside the geographic region. The river should provide, or have the potential to provide, settings for national or regional commercial usage or competitive events. In addition, the river may be eligible if it is determined to provide a critically important regional recreation opportunity, or be a significant component of a regional recreational opportunity setting.

3.5.2 Evaluation of Present Situation

Numerous recreational opportunities exist in the Blackfoot River corridor including fishing, hunting, rock climbing, hiking, camping, picnicking, floating, and boating. The Pocatello RMP designates this area as a Special Recreational Management Area (SRMA). Recreation sites exist along the Blackfoot River corridor and it is an intensive recreation use area. Semi-developed campgrounds are located in the Blackfoot River area. The number of visits to these campgrounds along the river corridor in 2001 totaled over 17,961. The most popular campground on the lower Blackfoot is Trail Creek Campground, followed by Graves Creek

Campground. The developed campgrounds visited the least are Cutthroat Trout and Sagehen Flats.

River guidebooks describe the Blackfoot River below the Reservoir to Trail Creek as containing up to Class III rapids with possible Class IV rapids during high flows. Rapid class ratings are described as follows:

Class I - Easy. Small riffles. No significant waves or obstacles.

Class II - Novice. Moderate rapids with regular waves, small drops, clear passages and wide channels. Occasional maneuvering may be required.

Class III - Intermediate. Moderately difficult rapids with larger irregular waves, often narrow channels. Complex maneuvering to avoid obstacles required.

Class IV - Advanced. Intense, powerful rapids requiring precise maneuvering in fast, turbulent water. Complex channels with many significant obstacles to be avoided.

Class V - Expert. Extremely long violent or obstructed rapids, often following each other almost without interruption. Drops may have large, unavoidable waves and holes or steep, congested chutes with difficult routes. Steep gradient.

Class VI – Unrunnable.

With adequate flows, most rapids between the Government Dam to Trail Creek are described as being runnable in open canoes, kayaks, rafts, and drift boats. The reach below Trail Creek Bridge with Class IV and V rapids was described as relatively unexplored but as having been run. These guidebooks refer to the area as an "extraordinary place to watch for birds," and as "having good fishing" (Daly, 1999).

In the study area, vehicle access is generally limited to existing roads and trails. Several trails exist within the river corridor. Hunting, hiking, and camping are common activities in the river corridor, and draw regional recreationists, as well as visitors from out of state. Hunting and fishing occur along the river throughout the year.

3.5.3 Resource Assessment Findings

River related opportunities include fishing, non-motorized boating, hunting, photography, and hiking. There are opportunities for interpretation on history of the dam, and travertine formations.

Intermittent flows are sufficient for non-motorized boating, however, flows are dependent upon releases from the dam. Flow rates decrease after irrigation season, due to BIA restricting water releases from Government Dam.

The majority of the segments of the river that were evaluated were found to have some recreational values but were not rare, unique, or exemplary within the regional comparative area. Segment 9, however, was found to have the unique feature of the Class IV-V whitewater rapids,

which provides exceptional kayaking and boating opportunities. This segment compared favorably to segments found within the Middle Snake River and segments of Gray's River within the comparative region. Therefore, it has been determined that Segment 9 contains a recreational ORV.

3.6 Geological

3.6.1 Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

The river, or the area within the river corridor, contains an example(s) of a geologic feature, process, or phenomenon that is rare, unusual, or unique to the geographic region. The feature(s) may be in an unusually active stage of development, represent a textbook example, and/or represent a unique or rare combination of geologic features (erosional, glacial, and other geologic structures). Additional District specific geological resource values include hot springs/geothermal values, caves, waterfalls or other features.

3.6.2 Evaluation of Present Situation

The Blackfoot River originates in the Idaho-Wyoming Fold and Thrust Belt of the Rocky Mountains. The mountains consist of intensely folded and faulted sedimentary rocks. They range in age from Cambrian through Cretaceous. The valleys are filled with Tertiary and Quaternary sediments and basalts.

Typically the Tertiary Salt Lake Formation underlies the Blackfoot River. This formation consists of light-gray tuff, mudstone, sandstone and conglomerate deposited in a lake environment and is present at places along the study segments within the study area.

The Blackfoot River exposes only a few thin (less than 20 feet) lenses of Tertiary Basalt, and deeper Quaternary Basalts. These basalts are black, vesicular, and often olivine bearing. A total of six different flows represent at least two separate episodes of basaltic volcanism. Below the reservoir, the river flows through canyons with bordering deep basalt cliffs, in some areas ranging from 100 feet to over 400 feet in elevation to the rim.

The Quaternary Loess deposits overlay the basalts and generally mantle the ground surface, or cap small ridges downstream from the cliff forming basalts. The loess deposits consist of wind-blown, very-fine sand, silt and clay and range between 75 to 100 feet in thickness.

Quaternary Alluvium was deposited above the loess and can be seen along several segments of the study area. The formation consists mainly of silt and sand and is located adjacent to the river channel. Deposits of colluvium are present within talus slopes below the basalt rims.

The reservoir has lava flows estimated to be about 900,000 years old, with rhyolite flows on the north and south sides of the canyon about 6.3 million years old. Travertine Park ACEC is located below Government Dam, and contains two springs with travertine outwash deposits.

3.6.3 Resource Assessment Findings

Even though the geological features within the river study corridor are remarkable, none of the segments that were analyzed were regionally unique. Therefore, none of the segments included in this eligibility study have been found to have geologic ORVs.

3.7 Fish

3.7.1 Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of either fish populations or habitat, or a combination of these river-related conditions. The river provides, or has the potential to provide, the exceptionally high quality habitat for wild stocks and/or Federal or State listed or candidate threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. The river is internationally, nationally, or regionally an important producer of resident and/or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance is the presence of wild stocks and/or Federal or State listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. Diversity of habitats and species is an important consideration, and could, in itself, lead to an identification of outstandingly remarkable.

3.7.1.1 Populations

The river is nationally, or regionally, one of the top producers of resident, indigenous, and/or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance may be the presence of wild or unique stocks, or populations of State, or Federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species.

3.7.1.2 Habitat

The river provides exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region. Of particular significance is habitat for State or Federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species.

3.7.2 Evaluation of Present Situation

3.7.2.1 Populations

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Blackfoot River was a nationally and regionally renowned cutthroat fishery. Historically rainbow trout were planted in both the reservoir and the river below. Studies completed on both the reservoir and the river in the 1970s and 1980s indicated that the wild cutthroat trout population was being over exploited. The size and number of cutthroat trout that were caught had decreased significantly prior to 1985 (IDFG, 2001).

The Blackfoot River system contains a mixture of native and introduced species. Native species include Yellowstone cutthroat trout, mountain white fish, Utah chub, longnose dace, speckled dace, redside shiner, Utah sucker, mountain sucker, bluehead sucker, mottled sculpin and Paiute sculpin. Introduced species include rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout, black bullhead, fathead minnow and carp.

In September 2001, the Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG) conducted an inventory and sampling event for genetic analysis on the cutthroat trout populations between Sagehen campground and Cutthroat campground. They found that the Yellowstone cutthroat trout was

the dominant species within this stretch of the river. The sampling event also identified the following species along this segment of the river: rainbow trout hybrids, hatchery rainbow trout, mottled sculpin, longnose dace, redside shiner, speckled dace, and Utah chub (Teuscher, 2002).

No threatened or endangered aquatic species are known within the Blackfoot River system. The Yellowstone cutthroat trout is a BLM sensitive species and is listed as a species of special concern by the IDFG. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) was petitioned to list the Yellowstone cutthroat trout and the Snake River fine spotted cutthroat trout, lumped as a single sub-species, as a potentially threatened or endangered species. On February 23, 2001 the Yellowstone cutthroat trout was found to be not warranted for listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (Federal Register 2001b). The leather side chub, potentially found in the Blackfoot River system, is listed as a sensitive species and a species of special concern by BLM and IDFG, respectively.

3.7.2.2 Habitat

The IDFG is currently managing the stretches of the river below the dam using management strategies for general management of fisheries, wild trout management, and quality management (IDFG 2001). During the ID Team field surveys, the habitat within the study area was identified as varying from fair to good salmonid habitat. The study segments between Government Dam and Morgan's Bridge were made up of fairly homogeneous habitats, mostly comprised of runs and riffles. These areas are characterized by low stream gradients and high sediment impacts resulting in cobble embeddedness. The heavy sedimentation loads are likely caused by the lack of a minimum flow release from Government Dam. It is believed that a minimum flow would improve the fisheries habitat below the dam. The stretches of the river through the canyon section (Segments 7 and 9) contained good to excellent salmonid habitat (i.e., high diversity and complexity).

The segments between Morgan's Bridge and the end of the study area have moderate habitat diversity and channel complexity (riffles, runs, pools, boulders, and islands). There are areas of increased sedimentation but for the most part have low sediment loads.

3.7.3 Resource Assessment Findings

Even though the fisheries within the river study corridor are locally important, none of the sections that were analyzed were found to have regionally rare, unique, or exemplary fisheries population or habitat. Therefore, none of the segments included in this eligibility study have been found to have a fisheries ORV.

3.8 Wildlife

3.8.1 Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

Wildlife values may be judged on the relative merits of either wildlife populations or habitat, or a combination of these river-related conditions. The river and river corridor contain animal populations or habitats that are rare or unusual, and are of regional or national significance, which are dependent on the river environment.

3.8.1.1 Populations

The river, or areas within the river corridor, contains nationally or regionally important populations of resident or indigenous wildlife species, which are dependent on the river environment. Of particular significance may be species considered to be unique or populations of State listed, Federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species.

3.8.1.2 Habitat

The river, or area within the river corridor, provides exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, or may provide unique habitat, critical habitat, or link habitat conditions for State or Federally listed, or candidate threatened and endangered species. Continuous habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species are met.

3.8.2 Evaluation of Present Situation

3.8.2.1 Populations

The Blackfoot River and the river's corridor provide habitat for numerous wildlife species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service performed a survey for raptors in 1989 and they documented use by numerous birds of prey including golden eagles, hawks, owls, and falcons (Saab and Lobdell, 1989). Olendorff et al. (1989) recognized the area as a "key raptor area." Terns, cranes, ducks, geese, and a wide variety of songbirds have been observed within the river corridor. Common terrestrial animals include the coyote, badger, white-tailed jackrabbit, long-tailed weasel, river otter, yellow-bellied marmot (rockchuck), porcupine, and ground squirrel.

There is suitable habitat within the study corridor for the greater sage grouse and the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, but no active leks are known to be in the study area. Moose, elk, and deer are known to winter along the river below Trail Creek.

There are no listed threatened and endangered species within this area. Whooping cranes have not been seen in the corridor and bald eagles are winter visitors, but there are no resident populations. The bald eagle potentially uses this area to hunt along the river during the winter months for fish, waterfowl and carrion. The peregrine falcon, which was delisted in 1999, is occasionally seen in the area.

3.8.2.2 Habitat

The Blackfoot River and the river's corridor provide habitat for numerous wildlife species. There is suitable habitat for the greater sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse in the study corridor, but no recently active leks are known to be located in the area. The area does not support habitat for the North American wolverine, gray wolf, and Canada lynx, which are listed as threatened or endangered by the FWS, and identified as potentially occurring in Caribou and Bonneville Counties. The riparian areas are characterized as being good to marginal, depending on intensity of grazing use within the study corridor.

3.8.3 Resource Assessment Findings

Even though the wildlife values within the river study corridor are locally important, none of the segments that were analyzed were found to have regionally rare, unique, or exemplary wildlife population or habitat. Therefore, none of the segments included in this eligibility study have been found to contain a wildlife ORV.

3.9 Prehistoric Cultural

3.9.1 Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

The river or area within the river corridor contains a site(s) where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. Sites must have unusual characteristics or exceptional human-interest values(s). Sites may have national or regional importance for interpreting prehistory. The sites may be rare and represent an area where a culture or cultural period was first identified and described; may have been used concurrently by two or more cultural groups; or may have been used by cultural groups for rare or sacred purposes. Of particular significance are sites or features listed in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places.

3.9.2 Evaluation of Present Situation

The BLM and Idaho State University conducted archeological studies in 1998 along a section of the Blackfoot River (located in Segment 3) (BLM, 1998). Pedestrian surveys were conducted on the river terraces along the river between Negro Creek and Graves Creek. Asides from some limited BLM archeological surveys at recreation sites, including Cutthroat, Graves Creek and Sagehen Campgrounds, no systemic surveys have been conducted along the river itself for cultural resources. However, it would be reasonable to predict that single and multi-component sites would most likely be found immediately adjacent to the river. The 1998 report also stated that it is most likely that prehistoric peoples favored areas within a short distance from the confluence of the main stem river and the smaller streams. Petroglyphs have been reported on the basalt rocks along certain stretches of the Blackfoot River within the study corridor.

Previous archeological studies were done near the Blackfoot Reservoir at the Poison Creek site in 1973 (BLM, 1998). Results indicated heavy reliance on plant resources, correlated by the closeness of the marshy areas to the site, and supported by evidence of hearths or earth ovens. This site dates to the Late Archaic period, generally between 1450 BC – AD 1250.

3.9.3 Resource Assessment Findings

Even though the study area may contain sites that were used by prehistoric peoples, none of the sections that were analyzed were found to contain any sites that are regionally rare, unique, or containing exemplary cultural values. Therefore, none of the segments included in this eligibility study are being recommended as having outstandingly remarkable prehistoric cultural values.

3.10 Historic Cultural

3.10.1 Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

Historic criteria require the river or river corridor to contain a site or feature associated with a significant event, person, or past activity that was rare or unusual in the region. Historical sites are usually 50 years old or older, with consideration given to sites listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

3.10.2 Evaluation of Present Situation

The entry of Lewis and Clark's party into the northwest marked the beginning of the exploration era in this area. Fur trappers soon followed and established competing companies, bringing more non-Indians into the area. Donald Mackenzie named the Blackfoot River in 1819, after he encountered Indians on the river. The Indians called themselves Siksika (black) and Kah (foot). The Blackfoot River was a natural corridor from the Snake River up to Grays Lake. In 1834, Nathaniel Wyeth built Fort Hall to trade with local Indians. By the late 1840s the fur trade was over. Fort Hall became a major trading post, serving fur traders and the emigrants passing on the Oregon Trail.

In 1860, Mormons brought the first cattle to Idaho. As the cattle industry thrived, so did the eventual arrival and successful operations of the railroads. The sheep industry was also introduced at about the same time.

The Lander Trail was established as a military road, but was also used as a sheep trail, and was named after the engineer, F.W. Lander. This road was built by the Federal government to improve the transportation systems in the northwest. It originally entered into southeastern Caribou County, went west towards Gray's Lake and towards the Blackfoot River, then at Ross Fork Creek it joined the Oregon Trail. Portions of the Lander Trail are under the reservoir, above the Government Dam; however, remnants of the Trail are still visible at the crossing of the river, and some segments of the Lander Trail are marked along the river.

3.10.3 Resource Assessment Findings

Even though the cultural values within the river study corridor are locally important, none of the sections that were analyzed were found to contain any sites that have regionally rare, unique, or exemplary cultural values. Therefore, none of the segments included in this eligibility study are being recommended as having outstandingly remarkable historic cultural values.

3.11 Traditional Use (Native American) Cultural

3.11.1 Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

Cultural criteria require the river or corridor to have sites with evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. The river or area within the river corridor contains regionally unique location(s) of importance to Indian Tribes including but not limited to Treaty protected resources and trust resources such as fishing, hunting, gathering and tribal cultural practice, as defined under treaty language. Locations may have unusual characteristics or exceptional cultural value being integral to continued pursuit of such activities. Sites may have regional or national importance for interpreting prehistory, representing an area where a culture was first identified, or concurrently used by more than one group, or for an area used for rare or sacred purposes.

3.11.2 Evaluation of Present Situation

Much of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' cultural heritage has survived and continues to be practiced, especially in the reserved treaty rights for natural resources off of the reservation. Fish and wildlife resources are very important to the Tribe and have great cultural value.

Ethnography documents the tribal use of the Blackfoot River corridor as a subsistence gathering area. Tribal Departments have enacted hunting regulations establishing seasons and take limits for game animals, including elk, deer, moose, antelope, bear, and cougar. Smaller game, such as rockchucks, rabbits, and birds are also currently hunted. Along the Blackfoot River, fishing is not regulated by the Tribal Fisheries Department. Plant resources important to the Tribes, which are used for various ceremonial, medicinal, and subsistence use, are located within the study corridor and include junipers, berries, plant roots, sage, etc.

3.11.3 Resource Assessment Findings

The criteria for Traditional Use, Native American, states those treaty protected resources that are rare, unique or exemplary within the study area can be declared as an ORV. The area within the study corridor holds local importance to Native Americans for hunting, fishing, gathering, and other traditional uses, it has been determined by the ID Team that on the regional comparative basis these values are not rare, unique, or exemplary, as defined under the Wild and Scenic Act. This determination was made on the basis that under the treaty rights associated with the 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty apply to all unoccupied Federal lands, including all lands under BLM jurisdiction. The wide availability of these treaty protected resources, identified under the traditional use category were determination by the ID Team to not contain values that are rare, unique, or exemplary due to the fact that they apply to all unoccupied Federal lands.

The Treaty protected resources and trust responsibilities of the BLM supercede any action associated with the Wild and Scenic River Study. The BLM will address treaty protected resources and its trust responsibility in the RMP process.

3.12 Botanical/Ecological

3.12.1 Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

The river or river corridor, contains nationally or regionally important populations of indigenous plant species. Of particular significance are species considered to be unique or populations of Federally listed or candidate threatened and endangered species. Additional factors such as diversity of species, numbers of plant communities, and cultural importance of plants may be considered. District specific resources may include rare plants and riparian values.

3.12.2 Evaluation of Present Situation

The Blackfoot River study area is a semi-arid zone. Mean precipitation is between 10 and 20 inches/year. Soils along the river are nearly level to steep, well-drained, and range from deep to shallow. Three-tip sagebrush/Sandberg bluegrass and big sagebrush/Sandberg bluegrass vegetative communities dominate uplands with deep well-drained soils. Black sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass vegetative communities can be found on uplands with shallow rocky soils. Some areas along the river also support stands of Douglas-fir and juniper. Invasive and noxious weeds (musk thistle, Canada thistle, and spotted knapweed) can also be found at places throughout the study area.

The condition of riparian areas along the river ranges from health to unhealthy. Some riparian areas along the river are severely impacted by livestock and recreational activities, while others

are in good condition. In 1993 and 1994, riparian areas were assessed along the river. These assessments found 11.55 miles to be Nonfunctional, 10.06 miles to be Functional-At-Risk, and 5.34 miles in the Proper Functioning Condition (BLM, no date). Riparian vegetation was also assessed in 1987, from the Blackfoot Reservoir downstream to Wolverine Creek. The condition of the riparian vegetation overall rated Good to Fair (BLM 1987).

No rare and threatened plants are known to occur along the Blackfoot River. In 1997, an extensive inventory for the threatened Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) was conducted along the Blackfoot River (Glennon 1997). During this inventory, habitat similar in appearance to Ute ladies'-tresses habitat was noted, but no plants were found.

An area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) along the river has been identified in the RMP. Special management attention is necessary to protect and prevent damage to the values for which it was designated and it does not require additional restrictions above those already in place. Travertine Park ACEC is located below Government Dam, and contains several unique features: an uncommon lichen species(*Teloschistes contrortuplicatus*), a small area of relatively undisturbed mixed-shrub vegetation; and two springs with travertine outwash deposits.

3.12.3 Resource Assessment Findings

Within Segment 9 a large percent of the vegetation within this segment has been protected well from human influences by the high cliffs, steep terrain, and nearly non-navigable white waters. Most riparian areas within this segment have been assessed to be in the Proper Functioning Condition (healthy). The Basin big sagebrush/giant wildrye plant assemblage primarily dominates upland vegetation. Bluebunch wheatgrass, gland oceanspray, and blue elderberry are also of unusual abundance within this segment. Although, no rare plants are known to occur within this segment the relatively unaltered vegetation within this area is rare within Blackfoot River regional comparative area. Therefore, Segment 9 has been found to have outstandingly remarkable botanical values.

3.13 Hydrologic Resources

3.13.1 Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

The river offers nationally or regionally unique examples of a free-flowing nature. These examples include flooding, bank or bed erosion, island building, down cutting, or water-created features such as falls, sinks, caverns and springs.

Water quality criteria describe the stream itself as exemplifying regionally or nationally significant characteristics such as purity, clarity, glacial "milk", or other factors. Criteria can also consist of the combination of water chemistry and temperature supporting life forms of regional significance.

3.13.2 Evaluation of Present Situation

The construction of Government Dam/Blackfoot Reservoir has altered the natural hydrography of the lower Blackfoot River in the study area. Several streams supplement the rivers' flow in the reach below the reservoir. The gauging station directly below the reservoir shows that the

river peaks in June, remains relatively constant through July, and then gradually declines in August, with flows around 400 cfs (Kotansky, 2002). Further downstream, irrigation canals, including the Fort Hall Main Canal, transfer water out of the Blackfoot River system. Water is also lost from the reservoir into underlying permeable lava formations.

The Blackfoot River is a 303(d)-listed stream, with sediment being the primary listed pollutant (DEQ, 1998). Other noted pollutants and alterations include nutrients, flow alteration, organics, and metals. Monitoring in 1986 found generally good water quality in the upper section below the reservoir, with increases in nutrient and turbidity levels observed at downstream sites leading to a degradation of water quality (DEQ, 2000).

One Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) site exists within the upper Blackfoot River above the reservoir. The U.S. Forest Service and Nu-West Mining, Inc. entered into an Administrative Order of Consent for the South Maybe Canyon Mine Site in June 1998. The site was listed primarily for the release of hazardous substances, including selenium. This CERCLA site's impact on the Blackfoot River below the reservoir is unknown.

3.13.3 Resource Assessment Findings

Due to the alterations of flow patterns and poor water quality throughout all 11 segments within the study corridor, it was determined that there are no hydrologic ORVs associated with this portion of the river. Therefore, none of the segments included in this eligibility study are being recommended as having outstandingly remarkable hydrologic values.

3.14 Outstandingly Remarkable Tract Findings

Table 3 shows a comparative or resource assessment findings by segment within the study corridor.

3.14.1 Segment 9. Wood Creek

Segment 9 consists of 5.6 miles of public land stream, and was identified as outstandingly remarkable for its scenic, recreational, and botanical resources.

3.14.1.1 Scenic

Segment 9 was one of only two segments in the study that received a scenic quality rating of "A". For a segment to be considered for recommendation containing a scenic ORV, it must receive a scenic quality rating "A". Segment 9 received a scenic quality rating of "A" because of the deep canyons, Salt Lake formations, and high basalt cliffs. There is a wide variety of vegetation found within this segment, which adds to its scenic attraction. The cascading whitewater, which consists of class IV-V rapids, is a dominant feature. This segment contains rich color combinations associated with soils, rocks, and vegetation. The adjacent scenery enhances the overall scenic quality of the segment. It was also determined that this stretch of canyon and its scenic value is rare within the region, and it is overall, a primitive canyon stretch. Therefore, Segment 9 is found to contain an ORV for its scenic characteristics.

3.14.1.2 Recreational

Segment 9 was found to have the unique feature of the Class IV-V whitewater rapids that provides exceptional kayaking and boating opportunities. This segment was found to compare favorably to segments found within the Middle Snake River and segments along Gray's River within the comparative region. Public comments submitted during the eligibility phase identified that boaters and kayakers travel from outside the region to run this challenging section of river. Segment 9 was found to contain recreational ORVs.

3.14.1.3 Botanical

Within Segment 9 a large percent of the vegetation has been well protected from human influences due to the high cliffs, steep terrain, and nearly non-navigable white waters. Areas such as these provide stable ecosystems best equipped to protect soils, furnish habitat for wildlife, and improve water quality. Therefore, it has been determined that many of the plant communities within this segment are in pristine condition, relatively unaltered by human disturbance, which is rare within the Blackfoot River regional comparative area. There were no rare plants identified or known to occur within this segment of the Blackfoot River. Segment 9 has been found to have outstandingly remarkable botanical values.

4.0 FUTURE MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

4.1 Interim Management

Within the BLM Manual 8351 Wild and Scenic Rivers, Section .32 Protective Management describes the process for interim management activities. The manual states that when a river segment is determined eligible and given a tentative classification (wild, scenic, and/or recreational), its identified outstandingly remarkable values shall be afforded adequate protection, subject to valid existing rights, and until the eligibility determination is superseded, management activities and authorized uses shall not be allowed to adversely affect either eligibility or the tentative classification, i.e., actions that would change the tentative classification from a wild river area to a scenic river area or a scenic river area to a recreational river area. Public notification of protective management shall occur no later than publication and release of the draft RMP, or plan amendment. However, protective management shall be initiated by the authorized officer (Field Office/District Manager) as soon as eligibility is determined. Specific management prescriptions for eligible river segments should provide protection in the following ways:

1. Free-flowing Values. The free-flowing characteristics of eligible river segments cannot be modified to allow stream impoundments, diversions, channelization, and/or rip-rapping to the extent the BLM is authorized under law.

2. River-Related Values. Each segment shall be managed to protect identified outstandingly remarkable values (subject to valid existing rights) and, to the extent practicable such values shall be enhanced.

3. Classification Impacts. Management and development of the eligible river and its corridor cannot be modified, subject to valid existing rights (see Section .52 below), to the degree that its eligibility or tentative classification would be affected (i.e., its tentative river area classification cannot be changed from wild to scenic, or from scenic to recreational). Should a nonsuitable determination be made in the RMP process, then the river shall be managed in accordance with management objectives as outlined in the plan document.

4.2 Suitability

If the river or segments of the river are found suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, public lands shall be administered in such a manner as to protect and enhance the values, which caused it to be found suitable, until Congress makes the final decision of whether or not to designate the suitable segment(s). In such administration, primary emphasis will be given to protecting its aesthetic, scenic, historic, archeological, and scientific features. Management plans would be tailored to provide protection and development of a given area that preserves the special attributes identified within that given area.

Section 10(a) of the NWSR Act is interpreted as providing a non-degradation and enhancement policy for all designated river areas, regardless of the classification. Each component will be managed to protect and enhance the values for which the river was designated, while providing for public recreation and resource uses, which do not adversely impact or degrade those values. Specific management strategies will vary according to classification but will always be designed to protect and enhance the values of the river area. Existing patterns of land use and ownership should be maintained, provided they remain consistent with the purposes of the NWSRA. Land uses and development on non-public lands within the river area that were in existence when the river was designated may be permitted to continue. New land uses must be evaluated for their compatibility with the purposes of the NWSRA.

Nothing shall affect the jurisdiction or responsibilities of the State agencies or Tribes with respect to fish and wildlife. Hunting and fishing shall be permitted on lands and waters (administered as suitable for inclusion in the national system) under applicable State, Federal, and Tribal laws and regulations. After consultation with the Tribes and State wildlife agencies, the Secretary may, however, designate zones on public lands where, and establish periods when, no hunting is permitted for the reasons of public safety, administration, or public use and enjoyment.

5.0 CLASSIFICATION

Once a river segment is deemed to meet the eligibility criteria, it is given a tentative classification of wild, scenic, or recreational. The definitions of these categories are defined in Section 1.3.2 of this document.

It has been determined that Segment 9 within the Blackfoot River study corridor contains ORVs for its scenic, recreation, and botanical values. Therefore, this segment is eligible for recommendation as a segment of river to be added to the NWSRS. This segment of the river is

free of impoundments and is generally inaccessible except by trail due to its steep canyon walls and class IV and V rapids. The shorelines within this segment are essentially primitive which contributes to the botanical ORV. The only characteristic that this segment contains that precludes it from a wild river classification is it's below standard water quality. This segment of the river is listed on the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's 1998 list of 303 (d) listed streams for sediment and nutrients (DEQ, 1998). Therefore, Segment 9 of the Blackfoot river has been assigned a tentative classification of "Scenic" under the definition provided in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Table 3. Blackfoot River Resource Assessment Findings by Segment

Segment Reviewed	BLM Stream length (mi)	Free Flowing Y/N	Scenic	Recreational	Geologic	Fisheries	Wildlife	Prehistoric	Histo		
1 – Below Reservoir	3.8	Yes	C	C	C	C	B	C	C		
2 – State	1.4	Not Assessed									
3 – Sagehen	7.8	Yes	C	C	C	C	B	C	E		
4 – Private	2.0	Not Assessed									
5 – Morgan's Bridge	3.1	Yes	C	C	C	C	C	C	C		
6 – Mixed Ownership	2.2	Yes	C	C	C	C	C	C	C		
7 – Trail Creek	7.3	Yes	B	B	C	B	B	C	C		
8 – Private	1.9	Not Assessed									
9 – Wood Creek	5.6	Yes	A	A	B	B	B	C	C		
10 – Mixed Ownership	6.6	Yes	C	B	B	C	B	C	C		
11- Wolverine	2.6	Yes	C	C	C	C	C	C	C		

Resource Value Ratings: A= Regionally Significant,
B= Locally Significant
C= Locally common

Note: * These are ratings that were defined and developed by the BLM ID Team; the BLM hereby acknowledges the tribal recommendation for this c
ORV; however, this recommendation is too broad as defined under the Wild and Scenic Act, as Treaty Rights apply to all unoccupied Federa
responsibility, which supercedes the Wild and Scenic Act, will protect treaty resources.
These values are not the same as those associated with the scenic quality value assigned under the visual resource inventory process.
Segments not assessed were excluded from the study due to the segments being comprised mainly of private or state land.

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APPENDIX A
ID Team Field Inventory Forms

BLM WATERWAYS RESOURCE ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

State:_____ **Waterway Name:**_____
District:_____ **Drainage:**_____
Resource Area:_____ **Tributary to:**_____
County:_____ **Evaluator:**_____
Map Attached:_____ **SEC**_____**TWN**____**RNG**_____

A. Is it free flowing? (YES OR NO):_____

B. Does it meet the definition of "river" in Sec. 16 (a) of the W&SR Act? *
(Y or N) Explain:_____

C. Is the waterway listed by these other inventory sources?

SOURCES	YES	NO
NORTHWEST RIVERS STUDY-IDAHO RIVER INFORMATION SYSTEM (IDF&G)		
NPS Nationwide Rivers Inventory (1982)		
Outstanding Rivers List by American Rivers, Inc. (1989)		
State Comprehensive Outdoors Recreation Plan (SCORP)		
State or Local government lists of river segments identified as being in the		
Public interest for Wild and Scenic (State Protected River System-IDWR)		
In or adjacent to Congressionally and/or administratively designated or		
Identified areas.		
Designated Stream Segment of Concern		
Other(s)		

D. Length of waterway in study segment (all or part):
Does it flow year-round YES NO
Is it entirely in this RA: YES NO
If not, what other administrative units is it in:_____
If ephemeral, how long and far does it flow water:_____
Estimate of length:_____
Estimate of BLM-administered river frontage in miles:_____
Estimate of BLM-administered acreage within a ½ mile river corridor:_____
Estimated % of BLM-administered acreage in the study segment:_____

Considerations in defining segment limits should include obvious changes in land status or ownership, changes in river character such as the presence of dams and reservoirs, or significant changes in types and amounts of development. Delineate on a map the beginning and end point of the study segment.

E. Are outstandingly remarkable values present that are unique, rare or an exemplary feature; significant at the regional level or national level? Resources to be assessed are: Scenic, Recreational, Geological, Fish and Wildlife, Historic/Cultural and other values. See guidelines and narrative forms.

**16 (a) "River" means a flowing body of water or estuary or a section, portion, or tributary thereof, including rivers, streams, creeks, runs, kills, rills or small lakes.*

The attached "Guidelines for Assessing Resource Values" will be followed and a written narrative developed to evaluate and document rationale for outstandingly remarkable, summarize basis for the judgment.

F. Other relevant inventory information:

_____ Attach Riparian Inventory
_____ Attach and photos
_____ Designations (ACEC, ect.)
_____ Fish and Game Inventory Data
_____ WSA:_____
_____ Under State Protection

G. Describe any known resource issues or conflicts (such as potential hydropower development): _____

Type of public involvement to be carried out before determination of W&SR eligibility status:___

Additional inventory/assessment procedures necessary before determination of W&SR eligibility status may be determined (attach pertinent results and note here):_____

Reviewed by _____ **Resource Area Manager:** _____

Evaluator_____
Segment Number_____
Field Date_____

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING RESOURCE VALUES*

All values assessed should be directly river-related, or owe their location or existence to the river ecosystem. The rationale for a direct river relationship is that the program involves the Wild & Scenic Rivers System rather than a generalized land and resource conservation program and it is, therefore, appropriate to focus attention on the river and resources directly related to it.

In order to be assessed as "outstandingly remarkable," a river-related value must be unique, rare or exemplary feature that is significant at a regional or national level. Those river related values that are **not** assessed as outstandingly remarkable **but** contribute substantially to the functioning of the river system and river setting should be described and their level of significance indicated.

Guidelines for assessing values are set forth below. These guidelines are meant to set a minimum threshold to establish outstandingly remarkable values and are illustrative and not all inclusive. In some cases a value may meet some or all of the criteria yet may not, for a well documented reason, be determined to be an outstandingly remarkable value. In another situation, a value may be called outstandingly remarkable for a reason not listed in these guides. The important and critical step is documenting the rational for the determination.

*Adapted from Resource Assessment Process in use in Oregon.

SCENIC Outstandingly Remarkable

Must be scenic quality "A". The landscape elements of land form, vegetation, water, color and related factors result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions. When analyzing scenic values, additional factors such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural modifications, and length of time negative intrusions are viewed may be considered. Scenery and visual attractions should be highly diverse over the majority of the river or river segment.

Yes/No—Presence of notable or exemplary visual features. Describe:_____

RECREATIONAL Outstandingly Remarkable

Recreation opportunities are, of have the potential to be, unique enough to attract visitor's form outside the region. River-related opportunities could include, but are not limited to: sightseeing, wildlife observation, photography, hiking, fishing, hunting, and boating.

Interpretive opportunities may be exceptional and attract or have the potential to attract visitors from outside the geographic region.

The river may provide or have the potential to provide settings for national or regional usage of competitive events.

River-related opportunities present (including interpretation):

Water volume sufficient for boating:

Level of development (impoundments, diversions, shoreline development landscape, or modifications):

Access (type and amount-standard of road, length of stream accessed, difficulty of access, inaccessible except by trail, etc.):

GEOLOGIC Outstandingly Remarkable

The river or the area within the river corridor contains and example(s) of a geological feature, process, or phenomena that is rare, unusual, one-of-a-kind or unique to the geographic region. The feature (s) may be in an unusually active stage of development, represent a "textbook" example and/or represent a unique or rare combination of geological features (erosional volcanic, glacial and other geological structures).

Specific to the Idaho Falls District (including hot springs/geothermal values):

FISH Outstandingly Remarkable

Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of either fish populations or habitat, or a combination of these river-related conditions.

Populations
The river is internationally, nationally or regionally an important producer of resident and/or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance is the presence of wild stocks and/or federal or state listed threatened, endangered and sensitive species. Diversity of species is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of outstandingly remarkable.

Habitat
The river provides or has the potential to provide exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region. Of particular significance is habitat for wild stocks and/or federal or state listed or candidate threatened, endangered and sensitive species. Diversity of habitats is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of outstandingly remarkable.

Fish Species present: Trout species (brook, cutthroat & rainbow) _____
Other _____

Potential for anadromous fish: Historical _____ No Potential _____ Unknown _____

WILDLIFE Outstandingly Remarkable

Wildlife values shall be judged on the relative merits of either wildlife population or habitat, or a combination of these conditions.

Populations
The river or areas within the river corridor contains nationally or regionally important populations of indigenous wildlife species. Of particular significance are species considered to be unique or populations of federal or state listed or candidate threatened, endangered and sensitive species. Diversity of species is an important consideration and could in itself lead to a determination of outstandingly remarkable.

Habitat
The river or areas within the river corridor provides exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, or may provide unique habitat or a critical link in habitat conditions for federal or state listed or candidate threatened, endangered and sensitive species. Contiguous habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species area met. Diversity of habitats is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of outstandingly remarkable.

Mule Deer_____Elk_____Bald Eagle_____Raptors_____Mtn. Lion_____Other_____

CULTURAL RESOURCES

PRE-HISTORIC Outstandingly Remarkable

The river or area within the river corridor contains a site(s) where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. Sites must have unusual characteristics or exceptional human-interest value(s). Sites must have national or regional importance for interpreting prehistory, may be rare and represent an area where a culture or cultural period was first identified and described; may have been used concurrently by two or more cultural groups; or may have been used by cultural groups for rare or sacred purposes. Of particular significance are sites or features listed in, or are eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places. Presence of site:_____

HISTORIC Outstandingly Remarkable

The river or area within the river corridor contains a site(s) or feature(s) associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare, unusual of one-of-a-kind in the region. A historic site(s) and or feature(s) in most cases is 50 years old or older. Of particular significance are sites or features listed in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places. Present of site:

TRADITIONAL USE, CULTURAL Outstandingly Remarkable

The river or area within the river corridor contains regionally unique location(s) of importance to Indian Tribes (religious activities, fishing, hunting and gathering, etc.). Locations may have unusual characteristics or exceptional cultural value being integral to continued pursuit of such activities. Locations may have been associated with treaty rights on ceded lands or activities unprotected by treaty on ceded lands or in traditional territories outside ceded lands. Presence of traditional use areas:

OTHER RESOURCE VALUES Outstandingly Remarkable

While no specific evaluation guidelines have been developed for this category, assessments of additional river-related values consistent with the foregoing guidance will be completed-including, but not limited to hydrologic, paleontologic, botanic and ecological resources. The assessments of any additional river-related values will be completed on a river-by-river basis as appropriate. The relationship of wilderness and/or wilderness study areas to the river and its associated values should be documented as applicable.

Specific to the Idaho Falls District:

Address riparian values & ecologic/biologic values:

Address rare plants:

Address WSA's:

Address caves, waterfalls or other features:

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

APPENDIX B
Public Comment Summary

BLACKFOOT RIVER WILD AND SCENIC ELIGIBILITY PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY

GENERAL COMMENTS

A total of 58 individuals or agencies responded to our request for comments on the Blackfoot River Wild and Scenic Resource Assessment. Each response was analyzed and broken down to identify each individual's comments. There were approximately 164 comments identified once the responses had been analyzed. Some of these comments identified multiple resource values which brought the comments to a total of 177 overall. All of the public comments received are kept in the official file at the Pocatello BLM Office and are available to the public for review. A matrix, which includes these comments, is available for review at the Pocatello Field Office. A breakdown of the comments received is as follows:

- 65 comments addressed the suitability phase and will be addressed at that time
- 12 comments addressed scenic values
- 19 comments addressed recreation values
- 13 comments addressed fisheries values
- 2 comments addressed wildlife values
- 5 comments addressing traditional use (Native American)
- 61 other general comments did not address a specific ORV

Many individuals described their love of the river and a desire to maintain the river in its current condition, and do not want the Blackfoot River to be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Those that opposed the designation felt that a change in management practices could serve better to protect the river.

SUITABILITY

Those comments that were received concerning suitability will be held until the suitability phase of the project. These comments addressed such issues as management after designation, opposition to the study, and support for the study.

SCENIC VALUES

The comments that were received on the scenic values generally addressed the canyon segments of the river, which are found in segments 7 and 9. Some individuals stated that even though these segments contain beautiful scenic values they are not rare or uncommon for the area. It was also mentioned that if these values are advertised they would be lost due to increased public use and development.

RECREATIONAL VALUES

The comments that were received on recreational values all identified the locally significant canoeing, boating and kayaking waters available on this stretch of the Blackfoot River.

Comments addressed the exceptional class IV and V rapids that are found in the canyon stretch (segment 9), and the class II and III rapids located between Sagehen campground and the Trail Creek bridge (segment 7).

FISHERIES
Many of those who commented on the fisheries values identified the fact that the Blackfoot River is a good location to fish, but the lack of a minimum flow from Government Dam really impacts the fisheries habitat within the study area. It was mentioned that all streams that contain Yellowstone Cutthroat trout should be eligible for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Study.

WILDLIFE
Individuals identified the wildlife in the area to be diverse, but not uncommon to the area or rare within the regional area.

TRADITIONAL USE
The comments concerning traditional use came from tribal agencies within the Shoshone Bannock Tribes. It was stated by the Tribes that the entire study area contains ORV for traditional use due to the area being governed by Treaty Rights as outlined in the 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty. This treaty gives tribal members off reservation rights of hunting, fishing, and gathering on all unoccupied Federal lands, and BLM managed public lands. Other issues included: impacts on water rights and potential for future water developments; impacts to treaty rights; and increased numbers of tourists, and trespass on reservation lands etc.

OTHER
The comments that were placed in the other category included those that were statements that did not require a response, comments addressing issues that the commenter wishes to see addressed in the eligibility document, comments concerning water rights, and comments concerning the public comment period.

CONCLUSION
Many of the concerns voiced by the public for this assessment are valid issues, and are greatly appreciated. The BLM is aware that many different individuals, with many different philosophies of water use and management, use the Blackfoot River. This portion of the study has requested comments on the eligibility phase of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Study.

The next step in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Study process will be a suitability study to assess if the tracts that have been found eligible should be recommended for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. In the suitability phase many of the comments that have been received will be reviewed again and addressed. The manageability and support or lack of support for designation of the segment found eligible will be examined during the suitability phase. Comments and responses are available for review in the Pocatello Field Office

APPENDIX C
List of Preparers

List of Prepares

Name	Agency	Title
Blaine Newman	BLM	Outdoor Recreational Planner
Cleve Davis	BLM	Botanist
Dan Kotansky	BLM	Hydrologist
Geoff Hogander	BLM	Wildlife Biologist
Joe Kraayenbrink	BLM	Acting Pocatello Field Manager
Pat Koelsch	BLM	Fisheries Biologist
Paul Oaks	BLM	Planning & Environmental Coordinator
Philip Damon	BLM	Pocatello Field Manager
Richard Hill	BLM	Archaeologist
Wendell Johnson	BLM	Mining Engineer
Jace Fahnestock	North Wind Environmental	Natural Resources Manager
Glen Russell	North Wind Environmental	GIS Support
Scott Webster	North Wind Environmental	Biologist
Kelly Green	North Wind Environmental	Environmental Scientist
Chad Colter	Shoshone Bannock Tribes	Fish and Wildlife Coordinator
Lytle Denny	Shoshone Bannock Tribes	Fisheries Technician
Hunter Osborne	Shoshone Bannock Tribes	Resident Fisheries Manager
LaRae Buckskin	Shoshone Bannock Tribes	Heritage Tribal Office
Rosephine Coby	Shoshone Bannock Tribes	Land Use Policy Commissioner
Tony Galloway, Sr.	Shoshone Bannock Tribes	Land Use Policy Commissioner
Yvette Tuell	Shoshone Bannock Tribes	Environmental Program Manager
Charlotte Reid	Blackfoot River Watershed Council	Chairperson
Linda Sailor	Blackfoot River Watershed Council	Blackfoot Citizens Committee

APPENDIX D
Photographs